

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee

Esteemed committee members,

My name is Tim Travis and I am the Principal of Saugatuck Middle School and High School, a small rural school of 212 students in grades 6-8 and 272 high school students. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify about the benefits to our students that direct credit courses have been providing since 2000.

At SHS we are very intentional in promoting a culture of academic rigor and the expectation that all students will graduate from high school and enroll in some form of postsecondary education such as a community college, trade school, four-year college or university, or the military. To prepare students to research and plan for their postsecondary education, we engage students in a variety of college and career experiences such as reverse job shadow day for eighth graders and sophomores, college visit day for all students in grades 8-12, attendance at the national college fair, field trips to Herman Miller, JCI and the JCI battery plant, and senior seminar, a course designed for students to explore who they are, investigate potential career paths, and to research and plan for their postsecondary options.

At the center of our culture is a growing expectation that students will challenge themselves academically through a variety of course options resulting in college credit while in high school such as Advanced Placement Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses at Hope College or Grand Rapids Community College, articulated agreements with Davenport University and Grand Rapids Community College, online courses such as those provided by Michigan Virtual University, and a growing number of direct credit courses taught by our teachers in our building resulting in college credit through Lake Michigan Community College and Kendall College of Art and Design.

This school year our 131 juniors and seniors have taken 42 Advanced Placement Courses, 16 dual enrollment courses, and 98 direct credit courses. Our students are able to earn the following college credits from our teachers on our campus:

Computer Aided Drafting	3	
Computer Aided Machining	3	6 credits in CAD/CAM
Intro to Welding	2	
MIG/TIG Welding	3	5 credits in welding
Art Appreciation	6	
Art Studio Drawing	3	
Art Studio 3D	3	18 credits in Art
Art Studio Color	3	
Art Studio 2D	3	
Spanish	8	8 credits in Spanish
Statistics	3	
Pre-Calculus	5	13 credits in Mathematics
Calculus	5	

These direct credit courses not only provide a significant financial benefit to our families, they provide an incentive for some students to continue their education at a community college because they already have a start on their degree.

These direct credit classes encourage students to challenge themselves academically as well. Before we added direct credit mathematics courses we had as few as 6 students registered for pre-calculus, the most rigorous math course we offered at the time. Heading into year three of direct credit mathematics courses we have 35 students registered for Pre-Calculus, 25 students registered for Calculus and 22 students registered for statistics. This means that more than 50% of our senior class will be taking a college level mathematics course next year. Direct credit courses are making students' senior year more rigorous and more relevant.

An additional benefit of teaching direct credit courses on our campus is the improved rigor for students taking these courses for high school credit only. These courses stretch all students to work at higher levels. In addition to the 98 direct courses taken this year, another 68 students took these courses for high school credit only.

While these courses transfer to many colleges and universities, some universities do not accept them. Even in these instances, students who have excelled in these courses often test into higher-level courses at their chosen college or university. While earning credit in high school has tremendous financial benefits, the academic preparation for postsecondary education is the real benefit for students.

When direct credit courses were first instituted at Saugatuck High School parents were happy when students graduated from high school with 6 or 8 college credits. With the addition of Advanced Placement Courses, additional direct credit courses, and increased dual enrollment opportunities following a direct credit experience, we now tell our incoming freshmen students and their parents that earning 30 credits or more in high school is not only very doable it should be expected. *for many students,*

We are currently exploring options for offering direct credit courses in science to provide our students with more challenging coursework their junior and senior years.

Thank you for this opportunity to share the benefits that offering college courses at Saugatuck High School have created for our students and for our school.